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ABSTRACT

The minutes of the regional meeting (for Latin America and the Caribbean) summarize discussions pertaining to the critical review and appraisal of the progress achieved and the formulation of strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000. They suggest concrete measures for overcoming obstacles to the realization of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, particularly in the areas of employment, health, and education. Statements by the Secretariat, representatives of countries, and international agencies attending the meeting are recorded. Strategies for the future and specific measures for the advancement of women up to the year 2000 at the national, regional, and international levels are suggested. Two brief lists of working papers and reference documents related to this conference are appended. (SY)

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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL MEETING FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

(Havana, Cuba, 19-23 November 1984)

SO 017 614

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date

1. The Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace was held in Havana, Cuba, from 19 to 23 November 1984. It was organized by the General Secretariat of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Dvelopment and Peace and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Attendance

2. Representatives of the following States members of the Commission participated: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom and Venezuela.

3. The Netherlands Antilles attended the meeting as an associate member.

4. Representatives of the following States members of the United Nations attended as observers: Denmark, Kenya and the Philippines.

5. The Secretariat of the United Nations was represented by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA), the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

6. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following United Nations agencies: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

7. The following specialized agencies of the United Nations were also represented: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

8. The Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Inter-American Commission on Women (IACW) of the Organization of American States, were represented in the meeting as intergovernmental organizations.

9. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were also present: Category I - Women's International Democratic Federation, International Planned Parenthood Federation, and League of Red Cross Societies. Category II - World

Young Women's Christian Association, Bahá'i International Community, International Federation of University Women, Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, Women's International Zionist Organization, Pax Romana (International Movement of Catholic Intellectuals and International Movement of Catholic Students). Roster - International Women's Tribune Center. The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was also represented.

Election of officers

10. The following officers were elected:

Chairman: Cuba

Vice Chairmen: Mexico
Ecuador
Guyana
Panama

Rapporteur: Argentina

Agenda

11. At the first plenary meeting, the following agenda was adopted:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda.
3. Report of the Chairman of the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 8-10 August 1983).
4. Critical review and appraisal of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in the realization of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, particularly in the areas of employment, health and education.
5. Formulation of strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000 and concrete measures for overcoming the obstacles to the realization of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, particularly in the areas of employment, health and education.
6. Consideration and adoption of the report.

Organization of work

12. During the first two days, the Meeting heard, in plenary, the report of the Presiding Officers of the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 3) and the reports of countries and agencies on the appraisal of the United Nations Decade for Women and the strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000 (agenda items 4 and 5). Simultaneously, for a day and a half, a drafting group, chaired by Mexico, met to prepare the regional appraisal of the United Nations Decade for Women and to propose strategies for the year 2000 (agenda items 4 and 5) with a view to submitting them to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

Opening meeting

13. Mr. Isidoro Malmierca, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mrs. Leticia Shahani, Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and Mr. Enrique V. Iglesias, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, addressed the opening meeting.

14. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba greeted those present and said that Cuba was honoured to host the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. He said that the conclusion of the Decade was characterized by a threat to peace, armed threats and a lowering of the quality of life as a result of the crisis and of the continuation of unjust structures. He referred specifically to the persistence of hotbeds of tension, armed conflicts and the undeclared war on Nicaragua, which constituted serious threats to peace. He emphasized that such a situation, aggravated by natural disasters, especially in Africa, was a time bomb that required decisive action by nations. Referring to earlier meetings, he placed emphasis on the progress that had been made and the main problems that had been faced in education, employment and social policies, among other things. He observed that the efforts that had greater or lesser success were threatened by the economic recession, and he emphasized the role of women in social and political struggles as one of their active forms of participation. He expressed concern over the tendency towards stagnation that could be seen in the region and examined the advances made in implementing the Regional Plan of Action. In this regard, he emphasized, among other aspects, women's increased entry into non-traditional areas of education, the difficulties encountered in political participation, the differences in the distribution of rural and urban incomes, pressures related to land, temporary or permanent migrations (especially of young women) and the obstacles stemming from the socialization of women. He stressed that Cuban women played a leading role in their society and pointed to the progress they had made in various sectors. Cuba was a country without luxuries or waste, whose battle for development had to be waged in the midst of preparations against danger, in which, however, no women were afflicted by the anguish of being unable to feed or educate their children. In conclusion, he explained the reasons for holding the Regional Meeting, expressed his confidence that it would be a success and gave the participants a warm welcome.

15. The Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace thanked the participants and especially the Government of Cuba for the support they had given to United Nations activities on behalf of women. She presented an overall view of the World Conference and emphasized the importance that had been given, in the regional preparatory meetings that had already been held, to the topics of equal opportunities, benefits and distribution of resources. She expressed concern over the inequalities that remained and pointed out that peace was indispensable for development and that in order to attain it, participation and mutual respect were essential.

16. She emphasized the importance of drawing up strategies and taking measures to guide activities beyond the Decade and pointed out that while different elements might have been considered from national viewpoints, the main problems were of a worldwide nature. Great changes had taken place between the beginning of the Decade, when there had been a general atmosphere of optimism, and the end. At present, the situation was aggravated by the economic crisis.

17. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC thanked the host country for its traditional warm welcome and the member countries for their support, pointing out that their presence ensured the success of the meeting. He emphasized the importance of the non-governmental organizations and their support for the efforts of the United Nations to awaken modern man's critical awareness of the unsolved problems that afflicted mankind and which had been exacerbated in recent decades. In 1975, the United Nations had drawn mankind's attention to something that was as old as the land: social and sexual discrimination against women in the development process. In 1977, the region had taken up the challenge and had prepared the Regional Plan of Action which had later been adopted by the Caracas and Mexico City Conferences. The topic had taken on added force and was now debated publicly. Progress was being made towards the objectives set by the World Conference held in Mexico City.

18. He emphasized the importance of using the concept of development as a philosophy for action which included the topics of distribution, equity and participation of men and women. Serious problems persisted and uneasiness concerning the economic crisis was one of the sad aspects of the century, but countries should be encouraged to design new strategies and to promote creativity. He referred to the lessons to be learned from the crisis and expressed optimism with respect to the achievements in some areas and the possibilities for future action. Peace had been ECLAC's main objective since its creation and the Organization was a mechanism for achieving it. The topics of peace and women were closely linked and he hoped that the Latin American and Caribbean countries would take a strong position at the Nairobi World Conference.

Closing meeting

19. At the closing meeting, Mrs. Leticia Shahani said that the meeting had been an encouraging and intellectually stimulating experience for her; she had been impressed by the feeling of solidarity which the women of the region had shown and by their understanding of how they were affected by external and internal forces. She stressed the fact that it had been recognized that the crisis being faced by the region as a whole was an organic part of the international structure and a result of the situations of individual countries. Through clear and concrete resolutions, adopted by consensus, and in a spirit of solidarity, the States of the Latin American and Caribbean region had made a significant contribution towards guaranteeing the success of the Nairobi Conference.

20. Mrs. Ana Montenegro de Fletcher, representative of Panama, speaking on behalf of the delegations, said that the excellent organization and efficiency of the meeting had enhanced its productiveness. She commended the ECLAC

representatives and the Cuban co-ordinators on their work, stressed the high quality of the documentation presented. She said she hoped the achievements of the meeting would be reflected in the future work of the countries of the region. On behalf of the delegations, she thanked the host country and the technical staff for their hospitality and assistance. The results of the meeting would encourage the countries to continue their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Decade.

21. Finally, before proceeding to close the conference, the Chairman, Mrs. Vilma Espín de Castro, said that as a result of the meeting, the region would be able to go to Nairobi with a common position. Noting that the meeting had been conducted in an atmosphere of solidarity, she invited the delegations to remain in her country for a while longer in order that they might get to know it better. She thanked the delegations for attending and stressed the quality of their interventions. She also thanked the secretariat of the conference and ECLAC for their collaboration.

B. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

Report of the Chairman of the Presiding Officers of the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 8-10 August 1983) (Agenda item 3)

22. The Chairman of the Presiding Officers of the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, August 1983) thanked the Government and people of Cuba for the opportunity of meeting again to continue the work of appraisal and the formulation of strategies for the future. She reported on the situation of women in the region at the time of the appraisal, outlined the recommendations of the Third Regional Conference, referred to the resolutions of the twentieth session of ECLAC (Lima, April 1983) and underscored the activities carried out by the ECLAC Secretariat during the period. She also reported on the decisions of the sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Conference and their recommendations and emphasized the importance of ensuring the continuation of activities related to the integration of women into development beyond the Decade.

Critical review and appraisal of the progress achieved and formulation of strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000 and concrete measures for overcoming the obstacles to the realization of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, particularly in the areas of employment, health and education (Agenda items 4 and 5)

Statement by the Secretariat

23. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the documents, stating that they should be viewed in the context of the regional appraisals and pointing out that overall analyses and efforts to improve sources of statistical information had been supplemented by complete substantive analyses and additional information from research projects and qualitative data that had contributed much to enriching the treatment of the subject-matter. Among other aspects, he stressed the importance of formulating strategies for the year 2000 that would strengthen regional co-operation and the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean and ensure that despite the crisis, there would be no reduction in resources earmarked for the implementation of social policies.

24. He emphasized the commitment of the United Nations to the cause of women and mentioned the main achievements of the Decade and the limitations that had hampered the Secretariat's task of presenting a complete appraisal (data, information systems and so on).

25. He mentioned the great interest of governments, especially in the legal aspects, in improving the education and encouraging the creativity of women. Among the obstacles observed during the Decade, it was worth mentioning the effects of the economic crisis on women and the lack of political will and commitment to the objectives of the Decade. Nevertheless, women, by their various activities in the struggle to survive in a period of crisis, had begun to gain recognition of their role as social agents.

Statements by countries and international agencies

26. In the plenary meetings, delegations of countries and representatives of governmental and non-governmental agencies made extensive and detailed statements on the appraisal of the Decade, mentioning also the main outlines of national strategies for the year 2000.

27. With respect to the areas to be stressed during the United Nations Decade for Women, various countries stated that there had been a great increase in primary education and in non-traditional vocational and technical education and training for women in different fields. There had been an increase in educational and literacy programmes for adult women. It was also noted that there had been a great increase in university education. Nevertheless, in most cases, educational programmes, especially non-traditional vocational ones, were still experimental and had not been implemented as widely as necessary.

28. With regard to employment, many countries emphasized the problems resulting from the economic crisis and its impact on women, especially as regarded the scarcity of resources. The increase in unemployment, the persistence of rural work and the difficulties of gauging non-remunerative work of women, especially in agriculture and in the household, were some of the problems mentioned. Emphasis was also placed on the need to measure the economic value of a housewife's work and include it in national measurements pertaining to the gross domestic product. On the other hand, an increase in the integration of women into the job market, especially in the tertiary sector, had been noted. While women increasingly occupied management posts, that trend was still not significant.

29. In the field of health, while the coverage of services had been broadened, there were still limitations on access by women. The increase in mother and child care programmes had permitted some reduction in mortality and morbidity; however, there were still serious problems in the region.

30. With respect to legislation, many delegations pointed out that their governments had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In some cases, emphasis was placed on the drafting of new codes to give married women the same rights as men and to make family roles more equitable.

31. Other matters that were of concern to some delegations were related to the creation and consolidation of national machinery, the promotion of effective social policies, the creation of different communication and planning networks,

the need to prevent pregnancy among teen-agers through appropriate sex education, and the need to link the question of women with those of science, technology and social security.

32. The impact of the economic crisis was emphasized and many delegations attached great importance to the operation of democratic governments, and to development, equality and peace as inseparable dimensions of the effort to improve the status of women.

33. The representative of Argentina said that the Decade in Argentina had elapsed for the most part under the military dictatorship. That had meant that the basic principles of development, equality and peace had not been honoured. At the moment, under the democratic government, the central objectives of the whole population were the defence of human rights, the maintenance of peace and the recovery and improvement of living standards, especially those of the most disadvantaged social sectors. During the previous period, discrimination and inequality had increased for the whole population and also for women. However, women had played a major role in movements aimed at actively working for peace.

34. Proposals designed to improve the status of women would only be fully achieved in a world at peace. An unjust world was today more than ever an unstable and insecure world. The Argentine Government was a firm believer in peace and social justice, both within and outside the country.

35. The representative of Barbados emphasized the work of the National Committee which promoted activities for the advancement of women in accordance with specific guidelines adopted by the government. Problems arose because of budgetary difficulties and the lack of resources; hence, the delegation stressed the need for greater promotion of women's roles in society in the hope of achieving a better world for all.

36. The representative of Bolivia said that the disastrous economic and social situation in Bolivia had made women's problems worse, as a result of the economic models imposed by the despotic régime which had governed the country during the Decade for Women. It was important to promote and organize the basic machinery that would allow women to play a genuinely democratic role in economic and social development under a national plan and policy. In Bolivia the mining and peasant sectors were of paramount importance and efforts were being made to give them a voice in the decision-making process through majority worker participation in State enterprises and in the Agricultural Workers' Agrarian Corporation (Corporación Agraria Campesina). Naturally, the role of women in decision-making would thereby be enhanced.

37. The representative of Brazil reaffirmed the legitimacy of women's aspiration to the equality and integration in the development process and the struggle for peace. In that connection, she stressed the importance of persevering in the conviction that the obstacles which hindered the full attainment of their objectives could be overcome. The issue, complex in itself,

was inserted in a context of similarly complex and highly diversified national situations. She alluded to the sectoral advances that had been made in her country with regard to the position of women, especially in the spheres of legislation, health, education and work. They were of only relative significance, however, in view of the seriousness of the crisis which the region was undergoing and the consequent deterioration of living conditions among the population as a whole. She stressed the political dimension of the impact of the crisis and observed that the paths of peace and development must run parallel, expressing her solidarity with regional co-operation.

38. Later, in relation to section C of the draft report, the representative of Brazil stated that she did not agree with some of the expressions contained therein and that she did not regard them as a precedent for any other texts that might be submitted for the approval of governments at United Nations meetings.

39. The representative of Canada said that substantive efforts must be made to achieve equality between men and women in order to ensure the benefits which would flow from the full integration of women into the political, economic, social and cultural development of society. Stressing the role of governments in that area, the representative described the structure of the relevant national mechanisms, which were made up of interrelated components. Measures had been taken at the legislative, political and bureaucratic levels to reinforce inputs from citizens. Non-governmental organizations had also played an important role. Because changes in the status of women would have an effect on society as a whole, policies should be designed to promote comprehensive action programmes.

40. The representative of Colombia said that, since women constituted one half of humanity, few United Nations programmes had had as much impact as those related to the status of women. The Colombian Government had made strenuous efforts to bring peace to Central America and to strengthen regional organizations. In promoting the integration of women into development, Colombia had emphasized, in addition to the sectoral aspects of the question, the political participation of women in tasks that required decision-making and leadership. In Colombia the Decade had showed a positive balance. The delegation urged that the World Conference at Nairobi should consider the questions of communication and of the political participation of women.

41. The representative of Costa Rica stressed that the government had become increasingly aware of the problems of women and had made strenuous efforts to integrate women into the development process. Its most successful efforts included the opening of a special office to deal with women's problems, the establishment of a number of bodies which would ensure institutional co-ordination and the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The effects of the economic crisis should be emphasized. The fact that Costa Rica did not have an army enhanced the prospects for peace, because it could allocate to social welfare programmes the resources that might otherwise be used for warlike purposes.

42. In view of the necessarily global character of regional reports, the representative of Costa Rica subsequently described some characteristic features of her country which she felt it was worth while to stress, in particular the advances achieved in the health and education sectors. In relation to the structure of health services in Costa Rica, a start had been made on a process of integration of the National Health System providing for preventive and curative action carefully graded by levels of complexity, and strengthening regional resource distribution with national distribution and active participation of the community. Currently, all the hospitals in the country belonged to the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (Caja Costarricense del Seguro Social), Social Security had been universalized and the coverage of care was very wide. With regard to the education sector, mention could be made of the progress in reducing the illiteracy rate (10.2%); the absence of significant sex discrimination in respect of access to the formal educational system; distance education at the higher level, in which the share of women amounted to 57%; and the Ministry of Public Education's textbook programme, which had been launched in 1983 and which introduced, through an agreement with the Department of Women's and Family Affairs (Dirección General de Mujer y Familia), new cultural patterns with the aim of contributing to the enhancement of the dignity of women.

43. The representative of Cuba said that any real change in the socio-political, economic and cultural situation of women required the formulation of a new social plan based on principles and action and not just on rhetoric. Women constituted one of the most vulnerable groups of the underdeveloped societies which were most affected by the economic crisis. The delegation stressed the importance of establishing the Voluntary Fund to carry out projects and programmes designed to improve the status of women. The Fund should continue in operation until the year 2000 in order to strengthen activities for the elimination of discrimination against women.

44. In conclusion, the representative of Cuba recommended that ECLAC should reinforce its women's programme with sufficient staff and resources to achieve greater successes in the period up to the year 2000.

45. The representative of Chile said that Chile had made advances in the areas of health, employment and education, in birth-control programmes and in the distribution of milk to children. At the same time, women covered by social security were entitled to a maternity grant. All firms and enterprises employing more than 20 women were required to have a nursery providing child care where the mothers could breast-feed their babies. Abortions had been substantially reduced as a result of programmes to foster responsible parenthood. Illiteracy rates had fallen while the percentage of women in higher education had steadily increased. The participation of women in the teaching profession had also increased. Women made up 35% of the labour force. Consideration was being given to the possibility of establishing shorter working hours during certain stages of life. They played a greater role in training programmes and in the various economic activities. They were still most active, however, in the services sector. Equal rights for women were proclaimed in the Constitution and women also took part in government activities.

46. The representative of Spain summarized the most important changes in Spanish legislation that had been introduced on the basis of the application of the new 1978 Constitution in which the principle of equality in law, without sex discrimination, was recognized. Spain had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in February 1984. The present economic crisis was an obstacle to the consolidation in depth of the recently established democracy, and a task that still remained was that of getting attitudes of mind and behaviour patterns to adapt in practice to the legislative changes secured. She emphasized the need for simultaneous economic, political and cultural development so that a new organization of society could be accepted in which women and men could take the position to which they were justly entitled.

47. The representative of France expressed great interest in the subject and in the various countries' presentations. The issues of peace, development and equality were closely related to each other and should be the basis of the work done. France was especially interested in seeing tensions eliminated so that the region might devote its resources to the struggle for development. France was prepared to make its experience available to the countries in order to help them progress in their study of the question.

48. The representative of Guyana stressed the importance of the regional meeting. The Decade had given a boost to activities for the advancement of women. Guyana had an office which dealt with the problems of women and provided advice at the ministerial level. Guyana had a long history of struggle to improve the status of women through the socialist revolutionary movement. The crisis should be given top priority. But it was also an opportunity for creativity. In Guyana, applied science and technology occupied an important place and a specialized institution had been established for its promotion.

49. The representative of Haiti said that, following its signature in 1980, Haiti had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. For that purpose a Presidential Decree had been promulgated on 8 October 1982 proclaiming the equality of rights of both sexes. Haiti's traditional attitude towards peace was that it was based on mutual respect among nations and on non-interference. In accordance with the principles of mutual assistance, Haiti was bringing to the other women of the region the experiences of Haitian women in favour of a more pragmatic than teoretical approach to alternatives and strategies for the integration of women into development.

50. The representative of Jamaica said that the problem of the marginalization of women could not be solved by inducing women to become active. Rather, women should be supported and encouraged to carry out the responsibilities facing them. Women should be convinced that they had a valuable contribution to make and that their communities and society as a whole appreciated their contribution.

Jamaica had always supported resolutions advocating the continuation of the Voluntary Fund beyond the end of the Decade for Women and considered that the Fund should become an autonomous body within the United Nations for the purpose of development and technical assistance.

51. Finally, any technical strategy must be based on national programmes and regional co-operation. To that end, ECLAC should be given the necessary resources and staff.

52. The representative of Mexico pointed out that, at the international level, Mexico recognized the need to eliminate unilateral actions that exacerbated existing imbalances. The government had adopted measures at the national level to reduce the sacrifices required by the crisis. It was absolutely necessary to restructure world economic relations, which had repercussions on all of society but especially on women, and particularly on those in the unprotected social strata. Mexico considered that the advances made and the obstacles encountered in implementing programmes in the national and international spheres to improve the status of women should be interpreted within this framework. Within the present Latin American context, peace had been difficult to achieve and, in practice, equality had not been fully attained. Benefits were increasingly a privilege of minority groups and therefore joint efforts should be made to obtain better living conditions for women.

53. The representative of Nicaragua stated that the war situation which it had been facing for the past 50 months had aggravated its problems because of the destruction of ports, schools, health centres and adult education centres --actions in which 7 000 men, women and children had lost their lives. Nevertheless, solidarity and assistance from abroad had allowed for significant advances to be made in education. Nicaragua had tackled the problems of preventive health care and had established a National Food Programme. Egalitarian standards had been established for employment and advances had been made in legislation. Nicaragua's revolutionary concept of the relation between the people and the State was important and peace was vital for development.

54. The representative of Panama noted that social progress in respect of women had been slow, although legal equality had been granted in 1946. During the 1970s, the participation of women in the areas of education, employment and health had increased. However, more jobs should be made available to women, who currently accounted for 29% of the economically active population. The introduction of the draft code on the family and the child was an important achievement. Because it was an underdeveloped country with a dependent economy, Panama's social development had been inadequate and that had hindered the advancement of women. Panama was concerned about foreign interference in that country and in Central America, which endangered peace and seriously limited the attainment of the objectives of the Decade.

55. The representative of the Dominican Republic stated that, like the other countries in the region, the Dominican Republic was faced with an economic crisis with a strong component of external indebtedness and disequilibrium in its balance of payments. In that context, it could be said that the status of low-income women, both rural and urban, had deteriorated more than that of other groups, especially since adjustment programmes had begun to be applied. The establishment of the General Directorate for the Advancement of Women and of sectoral offices for women in various ministries indicated the progress made during the Decade. The Dominican Republic had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its legislation had been modified to eliminate discrimination against women.

56. The representative of Saint Christopher and Nevis stated that women had been participating in the economy for a long time and that efforts were being made to stimulate their integration into the leadership levels. An important step in that regard was the establishment of the Women's Office, whose director had the rank of Minister. On making an evaluation of the situation and determining strategies, it was important to stress the problem of young people, their need for employment, recreational activities and programmes of non-formal education, and the need to encourage a desire to occupy positions of leadership.

57. The representative of Saint Lucia pointed out that its Government had supported activities and programmes for promoting greater participation by women in national development for the last ten years and that, for the same purpose, it had participated in meetings and workshops held by regional agencies.

58. One of the most important achievements of that country was the adoption of laws benefiting women, but lack of financing and of skilled staff had limited the government's actions to promote the integration of women into development.

59. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stated that, in spite of the difficulties that its government had faced in establishing an office of women's affairs, as called for in the Regional Plan of Action, it would strive to attain the objective of increasing women's participation in the development process, as set forth in that Plan. It planned to create a womne's bureau and the ministry in charge of women's affairs had requested assistance, especially in the areas of training and staffing. The government identified with the struggle being waged by women all over the world.

60. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago stated that its government had established the infrastructure that was required for integrating women into development, so that its main objectives were now aimed at consciousness-raising in order to overcome attitudes that were discriminatory towards women. In that regard, efforts had been made by holding seminars and conferences and broadcasting radio and television programmes to combat the attitude that women's affairs were trivial. The participation of men was important, since it would be difficult to achieve the hoped-for results if men did not become sensitive to the situation of women.

61. The representative of Venezuela stated that important achievements had been made in Venezuela in the integration of women into development but that difficulties of a general nature had also been faced, especially as regarded women in the marginal areas; that constituted a challenge for the Venezuelan Government. The Family Bureau had also played an important role, working in conjunction with the ministries of health, labour, education, justice and economic development, as well as with non-governmental organizations which had played an important role in improving the status of women.

62. Efforts were being made to co-ordinate the actions of the various organizations which were striving to improve the status of women and the work that was being done to design strategies for the future, which would be presented at the Nairobi meeting.

63. The representative of the Netherlands Antilles pointed out that there had been an increased awareness of the importance of the question of women, both among governments and among women themselves. Attitudes had changed, and the feeling that the biological differences between men and women did not justify inequality had become much more widespread; that was reflected in the reactivation of groups concerned with defending women's rights and in the increased participation of women in trade unions. The increased political conscientization of women had also led to more involvement in the decolonization process of the Netherlands Antilles. The culmination of that hightened political activity had been the recent designation of a woman Prime Minister. Governments attributed great importance to non-governmental organizations, which advised them and other social groups. Although changes were taking place, doubt was expressed as to whether the concrete recommendations of the World Plan of Action could ever be fully implemented while the New International Economic Order was not yet a reality.

64. The representative of the Inter-American Commission on Women (IACW) said that the Commission and ECLAC had close ties with each other, as they both served the same region and the same countries, had similar plans of action and even, at times, sent the same persons to meetings. It was important to co-operate, co-ordinate and integrate efforts in order to accelerate the integration of women into development. The Inter-American Commission on Women wished to renew its commitment to that goal. The region should present a united front and speak with a single voice at the World Conference in Nairobi; only by establishing unified objectives for the year 2000 would the goals proposed be achieved. The objective of peace, which was an essential requirement for true development, had not yet been achieved and therefore planned to declare the year 1985 as the Inter-American Year of Peace.

65. The representative of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women expressed best wishes for the success of the meeting and thanked the host country for its hospitality. Women played an important role in a changing world and the present moment could be a decisive one for achieving development before the end of the century and ensuring that the benefits achieved would be

shared by all. Many conferences were held during times of dangerous political tensions on the international and regional scenes and of great social unrest. In such times, women were even more vulnerable because of their position in society; that represented a challenge that went beyond the sphere of legal change. The question of the participation of women had not yet been resolved and the task of the Commission was to present at Nairobi common points that would facilitate the meeting. The framework should be flexible and dynamic and there should be a desire for peace and development and a spirit of solidarity and collective responsibility. It was to be hoped that Nairobi would mark the beginning of the construction of a better world.

66. The representative of CARICOM stressed the role of that organization in policy-making, consciousness-raising and the creation of human networks for the dissemination of information. It faced limitations in carrying out its work because of the scarcity of human and financial resources and the need for improvement through intersectoral links and links with co-ordinating agencies in the countries which had so far been neglected because of the lack of resources. Several studies showed that women in the Caribbean saw the improvement of their economic situation as their greatest need. Emphasis should be placed on national needs and the importance of establishing links with INSTRAW for the training of resources. Projects should be supported and an autonomous fund should be created with UNDP; programmes for generating self-employment and support systems for them should also be carried out.

67. The representative of INSTRAW stressed that training and information were essential elements of strategies aimed at achieving the objectives of development. There had been an aggravation of underdevelopment in the region, unemployment was high and it was important to apply new models and concepts of development. Economic processes had a great deal to do with the status of women and it was important to note that women did not constitute a homogeneous group, inasmuch as they participated in many sectors of the labour force. It was not wise to correct specific problems instead of conducting a more systematic reorientation; also, overall and sectoral strategies remained unrelated. INSTRAW was an open and flexible system that should be supported by the developing countries. Activities aimed at improving information and strengthening plans and technical co-operation should be reinforced. Work should be done in new areas such as training designed in the form of modules, training for policy design, reinforcing research and creating new institutions. Finally, only joint action would open the way for long-term strategies to be carried out beyond the Decade.

Other statements

68. The representative of the Bahá'i International Community analysed the strategies applied and stressed that not enough progress had been made. It was important to move from the stage of consciousness-raising to the stage of action. The Bahá'i International Community offered its support in the task of improving the status of women. Equality was essential to world development and peace and the equality of sexes began with equality of education; therefore, Bahá'i encouraged

women to become educated. The representative stressed the philosophical value of the Bahá'i International Community, which aimed at achieving family and community stability for its members.

69. The representative of UNICEF outlined the co-operation that organization had given to governments of the region in connection with the improvement of the status of women. Initially, because the target group served by UNICEF was children, it had been concerned with women in that connection, although it was currently helping to provide comprehensive care for women with a view to improving their situation. UNICEF's current programme had been designed in response to previous appraisals at which it had been concluded that none of the activities undertaken really fit in with the Regional Plan of Action, since recourses were being scattered in the region and used for many different programmes which, although positive, did not effectively achieve the objectives of integrating women into development. Currently, UNICEF was working with packages of decentralized projects in order to reach broader groups and regional programmes were evaluated in conjunction with the governments, in an effort to improve the methodologies used in working with women.

70. The observer of Kenya, the country which would host the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, stated that Kenya was very interested in the preparations that women and their governments were making concerning the matters that would be discussed in Nairobi in 1985. The Government of Kenya was working to ensure the success of the Conference and to create a suitable atmosphere for that important meeting. It urged the delegates who would attend the Nairobi Conference to show a co-operative spirit in discussing the items on the agenda.

71. The Meeting asked that the final report of the Seminar on the Review and Appraisal of the Decade for Women (Córdoba, Argentina, 14-18 August 1984) sponsored by the Inter-American Commission on Women, and the oral statement made by CARICOM, be transmitted to the General Secretariat of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. Those documents would be useful in preparing for the World Conference.

72. The Meeting expressed its conviction that the appointment of high officials to women's programmes in the regional economic commissions constituted a valuable contribution for the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women and beyond the Decade.

73. It was felt that the level of women's programmes in ECLAC should be maintained or raised, as the case might be, bearing in mind the decisions to be taken at Nairobi, and that suitable high-level staff should be assigned to those programmes on a permanent basis within the regular programme of work of ECLAC.

74. The Meeting agreed that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women had made an extraordinary contribution through its technical and financial co-operation activities, to the achievements of the goals of the Decade and the integration of women into development in Latin America.

75. It was felt that any measure that might be adopted with respect to the future operation of the Fund should take into account the high professional competence of that institution in assisting efforts aimed at incorporating women into development, as well as the need to strengthen that competence, bearing in mind the special needs of the women of each region and the advisability of maintaining co-operation and co-ordination with the other United Nations agencies carrying out activities in the field of women, and of maintaning its links, for example, with the Commission on the Status of Women and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

C. APPRAISAL OF THE DECADE AND CONCRETE OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES AND MEASURES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN UP TO THE YEAR 2000 ADOPTED BY THE REGIONAL MEETING FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Critical review and appraisal of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in the realization of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women

76. This Meeting is the culmination of a regional process of review and appraisal of the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, as well as of the design of operational strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000 initiated at the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean; and it is being held less than a year before the end of the Decade. This implies that the appraisal has been based on the reports of the World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico, 1975), the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Copenhagen, 1980) and the three regional conferences. It has likewise taken into account the Appraisal of the Implementation of the IDS for Latin America and the Caribbean (twentieth session of ECLAC, Lima, 1984). Therefore, efforts and resources must be focused on solving the problems linked to national, regional and international social and economic development with which women will be faced in the future, above all with regard to equality, development and peace.

77. Albeit the elements that make it difficult to assess progress related to the integration of women into development have been emphasized on numerous occasions, it would be advisable to point out some of their essential aspects. One of these is the wide variety of parameters used in each country to measure national realities. Another has to do with the countries' different sizes, economic situations and ways of tackling the crisis. Moreover, the national situations are increasingly complex, as are the relations between the social groups and their relations with the governments. These are only the most outstanding aspects that impede exhaustive assessments and comparative analyses of the specific situations in individual countries. Nevertheless, it is mainly those common to all, such as economic dependence, the foreign debt and other characteristics that influence the need to seek points of consensus in order to adopt a regional criterion whereby a new pattern of development can be found that will basically break the ties of dependence. Furthermore, even though the transformations in the region have already lasted nearly three decades, the context in which the United Nations Decade for Women was initiated and that in which it is being concluded are different. When the Regional Plan of Action was adopted in Havana in 1977, there were signs of

optimism and growth in the region, which are now replaced by deep concern over the worsening of the crisis and the consequent deterioration of the life of our peoples.

78. Latin America and the Caribbean are currently undergoing their most acute economic and political crisis of the past 50 years: a crisis which has placed most countries of the region in a precarious situation and which has been caused by both external and internal factors. The last years of the Decade have witnessed a deterioration of the general economic situation in the region. The financial, economic and social crisis of the developing world has worsened the situation of large sectors of the population, and especially women, who in the Caribbean are, in large proportion, heads of household. In particular, the decline in economic activity is having a negative impact on an already unbalanced distribution of income, as well as on the high levels of unemployment prevailing in the subregion, which affect women more than men.

79. The living conditions of the women of the region are a problem that concerns all of Latin American and Caribbean society. The central development problems prevailing in the countries of the region concern three essential, dynamically interrelated aspects which characterize the status and evolution of the socioeconomic process. They are, first, the harmful effects that continue to be felt in the structure of their foreign relations --as a result of the nature of trade and the increased protectionist measures adopted by some developed countries in their trade with the region--, the deterioration of the terms of trade and the increase in the foreign debt; secondly, a decline in the growth rate in most Latin American countries in consequence of these foreign relations and the crisis in the world economy; and, thirdly, the present unsatisfactory socioeconomic structures that have tended to form extremely inequitable societies.

80. The effects of the world economic crisis on the Latin American economies --which are most clearly manifested in the contraction of the region's trade, the disproportionate increase in international bank interest rates, the tightening of the already crippling protectionist measures that the Latin American countries' traditional markets are applying against their exports and the adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund on the majority of the governments of the region in the rescheduling of their debts-- have greatly impaired the region's economic capacity to cope with its economic programmes. The crisis made itself felt in Latin America and the Caribbean with even greater force, inasmuch as most of the countries in the region have inequitable, unjust societies characterized above all by inequality in the distribution of national income, and in participation in national development processes. In other words, a broad mass of the population --in which women play a significant role-- is dispossessed and reduced to extreme poverty and even to crushing indigence, while most of the benefits of the development process go to minority population strata.

81. This set of interrelated social problems --such as the unequal distribution of income; critical poverty; unemployment, underemployment and poor working conditions; the low productivity of a considerable part of the

labour force; the backwardness and marginalization of vast rural and urban sectors; the widespread illiteracy and semi-literacy, which have a negative effect on the capacity of the labour force; and most of the population's limited participation in decision-making at all levels and in the process of economic, social and political development-- constitutes a major challenge and affects large sectors of the national population in some countries and the majority in others.

82. Although the situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean has experienced a relative improvement, this cannot be regarded as extending to all women or to all aspects of social life. The living conditions of women vary enormously, depending on the socioeconomic strata to which they belong. In accordance with this, too, their forms of participation in economic, political, social and cultural life likewise vary, as do the sources and forms of discrimination to which they are subjected. The women most affected by this situation --which is the product of inadequate socioeconomic structures-- are those belonging to the lowest income groups, especially in rural areas and urban slum or shanty town areas.

83. Therefore, as affirmed in the RPA, the problems preventing women's participation in the economic, political, social and cultural life of their countries are intimately linked to the general conditions of underdevelopment. Hence it is essential to bring about the required transformations in the socioeconomic structures and to take specific action that will aid in modifying the situation of Latin American and Caribbean women, so they may take an active part in changing the existing structures and become a decisive factor in the achievement of full equality between men and women.

84. It is common knowledge that men and women share certain living conditions determined by the fact that they form part of a given society and a given socioeconomic stratum within that society, and that women face specific discrimination resulting from the social and sexual division of labour.

85. With regard to employment, it can be seen that the percentage of women incorporated into the labour force remains very low. Although the percentage of participation is greater in the Caribbean than in the rest of the region, it should be noted that this is largely due to the availability of employment in subcontracting activities. In the region as a whole, most women work in unskilled jobs, concentrated in the service sector, especially in domestic service and unpaid family work. In many cases, women are the object of discrimination and exploitation with regard to wages, working conditions and contract practices, and there are real limitations on their being hired and remaining employed. This situation is more critical in rural areas, causing an exodus from the countryside to the cities. In Latin America, 65% of the population lived in the cities in 1980, and, according to projections, this proportion will increase to 76% by the year 2000. The demographic growth rate will exceed 2%: if present conditions persist, migratory flows from the countryside to the cities will consist mainly of young single women.

86. In analysing the case of women who are already incorporated into the labour force and the problems deriving from their dual responsibility for work inside and outside the home, general points should be noted: a) in a great many cases, the occupations in which they work are those traditionally assigned to women; b) since these are jobs on which a low social value is set, they are usually badly paid and carry little prestige; c) married women who take a job must do a double day's work, unless they have the means to employ a domestic worker to do their housework or can get a relative to help them. The situation of women who are heads of household is even worse, since they simply have to work to earn a living; d) women employed in the tertiary sector are mostly travelling saleswomen and domestic workers. Bearing in mind the rise in educational levels, however, it can be assumed that these jobs will not be acceptable to the coming members of the labour force, whose expectations will probably be higher. Predictably, therefore, social pressure will in the future be brought to bear on employment --pressure which could in some cases generate serious social conflicts unless appropriate solutions are quickly found: i.e., ways and means of creating enough jobs to absorb the increasing flow of women graduating from the educational system. Various studies have confirmed the influence of education on the decision to enter the labour market. Mention has also been made of the danger that the economic crisis may bring about a swingback towards the traditional ideology that seeks to keep women confined to their role as housewives.

87. The structure of health services commonest in the region is centred primarily on curative medicine, with a predominance of private services, a serious lack of free public services and a system of hospital care which has very specialized services concentrated mainly in urban areas. If a larger resource allocation could be secured for activities aimed at the prevention and early detection of disease expenditure at the curative level could be better adjusted to the available resources, of which at present it absorbs the lion's share. In most of the countries of the region, the economic crisis has led to a reduction of the funds allocated to the health sector and to a decline in the services provided by the State and intended primarily for low-income population groups and rural areas. In the field of social security, unemployment and underemployment, and the special participation of women in the informal sector, as, for instance, in domestic service and rural labour, have meant that fewer women are covered by health care under the social security system. This has been reflected in a deterioration of women's health situation in the region. The emphasis on curative medicine in the countries concerned has led to a considerable increase in spending on medicaments. The monopolistic features of the production of medical supplies and the almost total external dependence of the countries of the region are a source of particular concern, because drugs and medications are introduced that do not always meet the people's real health needs but serve the interests of a market which exacerbates the economic crisis and the external dependence in question.

88. Despite the fact that education is an essential factor in the peoples' economic and social development, women constitute a high proportion (60 to 80%) of the total illiterate population in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lack of access to education for majority groups and particularly for women has forced

the latter into traditional sectors of the economy --mainly domestic services, shopkeeping, cottage industries and agricultural tasks. Then there is the special problem of girls and young women who drop out of school for lack of economic resources, pregnancy, the need of a job to supplement the family income, or other causes.

89. Some of the characteristics of the educational system in the region have been a high growth rate, in terms of the reduction of illiteracy in the 15-and-over age group; increased coverage of school-age children; and their significant absorption, as measured by the progress made in the population's incorporation into the educational system. Notwithstanding this expansionist trend, the educational process retains élitist and exclusive traits. Thus, while enrolment in intermediate and higher education increases at a rapid pace, a considerable portion of the population aged ten years and over is still illiterate. Gauging the educational situation seems easy, since there are abundant statistical data. Some aspects, however, are still unexplored such as feminine drop-out and absentee rates and differences in the contents of curricula and in the ways in which boys and girls are taught.

90. Statistical data are available for analysing literacy and educational levels. Census data only allow for an overall analysis of the situation of women as a nominal category, however. In other words, distinctions can be made between the differences in the situations of women and of men, from one country to another and within a given country, but the differences existing within the category "women" are overlooked.

91. The following are the main educational problems in most of the countries of the region:

i) Although wider coverage has been provided in respect of primary education and the enrolment percentages warrant optimism, it will still take several decades for the entire population to complete at least the basic cycle. At this level, there are no marked differences based on the students' sex, but there are with regard to areas of residence; special attention should be given to the rural areas, which are the most backward. Primary education offered by State institutions is free, but this does not suffice to ensure full coverage. The implicit content of education is of major importance at the primary level, since what is learned at that age will condition the traits to be enhanced or attenuated in the child's personality;

ii) The intermediate level poses no serious problems, since its rate of expansion to cover the feminine population is satisfactory. At this level, women are not discriminated against in general, but their specialization is usually restricted to learning some middle-level skills and technical vocations. Many women drop out because of lack of economic resources, pregnancy or the need to work outside the home;

iii) Discrimination against women remains greater in higher education, though more women than men are enrolled at that level. Specialization by vocational courses is, however, still in accord with what has been established by sex stereotypes: cultural barriers determine an over-concentration of young women students in the careers traditional for women and a small number in the technical courses that open the way to the new technologies;

iv) It should be mentioned that, although there is a trend in the region towards greater incorporation of women into secondary and higher education, serious differences between population groups still persist, which makes it necessary for the educational system to ensure equitable access;

v) Continuing education and non-formal education in the area of skills training has been emphasized during the Decade, but these activities are still fragmentary and not easily accessible, particularly to women in rural areas. Training is given mainly in skills traditionally associated with women and has not encompassed the type of specialized technical training envisaged.

92. From the formal point of view, in the area of legislation, the following are some of the points on which agreement exists at the end of the Decade: no one may deprive a woman of her right to vote, and, in countries where voting is obligatory, an attempt to prevent her from exercising it may incur penalties. Majority is attained at the same age by both sexes and involves the same rights and responsibilities. No one may attempt to prevent a woman from exercising her profession or occupation. Legislative changes are being aimed more and more frequently at equalizing responsibilities with regard to parental authority over children, administration of the family's assets and the establishment of the domicile or household. Equality of labour rights has been established throughout the region, but has not been adequately enforced. Protection of motherhood is guaranteed by legislation throughout the region; however, the concept of maternity as illness is still maintained and makes it difficult to implement existing regulations and contractual clauses. The situation of urban women appears to be better in these respects than that of rural women, on behalf of whom large-scale efforts should be made to develop egalitarian attitudes at both family structure and institutional levels. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that since, in general, these laws have not been applied effectively, their application should constitute one of the objectives or strategies for the year 2000.

93. The exercise of civil, political and social rights should not be conditional on women's and men's knowledge or ignorance of them. To adduce the need for women to know of their rights in order to exercise them implies discriminatory treatment against them, since approximately the same proportion of men are unaware of their rights yet they are nevertheless required to exercise them as a duty.

94. In spite of all efforts, no significant progress has been made with regard to the statement in the Regional Plan of Action that the mass media tend to have harmful effects on attitudes and values related to the function and role of women in society, that they frequently raise obstacles to positive changes in behaviour patterns and that they may perpetuate stereotypes and myths concerning women.

95. It has been observed that sexist cultural patterns still persist in educational systems, mass media and socializing activities. In the mass media, this phenomenon is aggravated by the strengthening of the role of the transnational model and the absence of alternative channels of communication for, by and with women on a multinational basis throughout Latin America.

96. Significantly, women's political involvement in economic and social development in most of the countries in the region is extremely limited. Though women constitute almost half of the electorate, their representation on legislative bodies is minimal, and it is even lower on executive bodies. Women are not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process, their views are not respected and their needs are disregarded in development planning in most countries. All these disadvantages, which are reflected in the economic and social situation in the region, are heightened by problems such as violence against women, prostitution, illegal trafficking in persons and narcotics, rape, drug addiction and other forms of crime and antisocial behaviour. Mention must also be made of the fact that the existence of non-democratic governments in the region has influenced the loss of the most fundamental political rights of women political refugees, exiles and involuntary migrants.

97. On the foregoing evidence, it may be asserted that the overall quality of life has declined substantially, owing to the multiple effects of the economic crisis and, in most countries, to a reduction, in real terms, of public spending on education, health and housing under the various stabilization programmes, as well as to the weakening of social security and welfare systems. This implies reduced access to goods and basic services, such as food, housing, health and education, for the majority of the population.

98. This situation has been aggravated by the tensions existing primarily in Central America and the Caribbean, and in the Southern Cone, as a result of foreign interference in the internal affairs of the States of the region, in violation of the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, all of which has created focal points of conflict that represent a serious threat to regional and international peace. Armed intervention in the Caribbean has recently had dramatic manifestations, of which a more vigorous resurgence has already begun in Central America. Similarly, the continued violations of fundamental human rights affect the physical and psychological integrity of women, men and children in the region. These are some of the obstacles to the development of Latin America and the Caribbean and to inter-country negotiations, such as those of the Contadora Group, which make the achievement of the objectives of the Decade difficult since development and equality are impossible without peace. The existence and persistence of destabilizing policies aimed at perpetuating or reinstating authoritarian systems constitute yet another serious obstacle in

the way of the objectives set for the Decade. The exercise of the rights of women, which are integral part of human rights, can be ensured only within the framework of democratic participation.

99. The solution of current problems, however, is more complex today than in the past, and the gravity of the present situation calls for strategies that respond to the new needs of countries and societies which are totally different from what they were before, both in level of development and in economic, political and social aspirations. With each passing day, therefore, it becomes more essential to step up the struggle for equality, development and peace and for the elimination of societies in which the benefits of development are unequally distributed.

100. On the basis of the foregoing appraisal and in the interest of overcoming the above-mentioned obstacles to women's full integration into the economic, political and social development of their respective countries, governments, women, ECLAC and other international organizations should pledge themselves to accord importance and priority to forward-looking strategies and concrete measures for the advancement of women up to the year 2000.

101. The Regional Plan of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean, in relation to the International Youth Year, states that young women bear the brunt of the conflicts generated by the transformation that has taken place in the region. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that, in their case, the other changes are compounded by very rapid modifications in their educational level and in the role of women in society. Both phenomena widen the cultural gap between them and adult women and hamper the socializing function of the family, which is an expression of traditional patterns and values and to which young women have much stronger ties than young men. Moreover, young women's increasing incorporation into the active population creates role conflicts for them between their job --frequently organized and regulated by men-- and family life. The problem is rendered worse when family roles are influenced by machist attitudes and early motherhood, which are very common in Latin America. In addition, because they are women, they are much more vulnerable to the effects of social marginality, particularly when it is linked to irregular family situations, unstable early unions and premature motherhood. Young women are particularly hard hit by the unemployment characteristic of youth, and aggravated by the situation of the Latin American and Caribbean economies. To this must be added the various forms of discrimination against women which still prevail in these societies.

102. Furthermore, the Regional Plan of Action implied the generation of activities aimed at transforming the status of women. This is reflected in a growing awareness of their situation and has given impetus to its improvement. The presence of women in the processes of democratization and structural transformation of many of our societies must not be forgotten; in these, the traditional stereotypes have been shattered and the models which are emerging are oriented towards equality of rights and responsibilities between the sexes. For this reason, in spite of the crisis and its impact on the standard of living, it seems that the qualitative changes which have occurred with regard to the status of women are deep-seated and unlikely to disappear as a result of the present situation.

Strategies for the future and concrete measures of application for the advancement of women up to the year 2000

103. The World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation remain valid at present and therefore constitute the basis of activities for strategies and concrete measures up to the year 2000.

104. Aware that it is necessary to concentrate efforts and resources on solving the problems linked to economic and social development at the national, regional and international levels so as to enable women to achieve true integration, especially as regards equality, development and peace, the Latin American and Caribbean governments, taking into account the results of the three regional conferences on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the context of the economic, social and cultural characteristics of their countries, pledge themselves to make efforts to implement the concrete strategies and measures for the future advancement of women, as set forth below:

At the national level

105. To bear in mind, with regard to development, that the framework within which strategies for the future should be formulated must take into consideration, first, the effects of the crisis and, secondly, the need to reformulate some aspects which seem to be most relevant to the development process. This type of analysis should combine socioeconomic aspects with an ethical and cultural approach to society. Consequently, development should be considered as an integral process characterized by the achievement of economic and social objectives and goals that guarantee the population's effective participation in the development process and its benefits, to which end it is necessary to effect thoroughgoing structural changes in that sphere as a prerequisite for the desired process of integrated development. In order to attain this objective, the full participation of women on a plane of economic, political and cultural equality is considered indispensable. During the 1980s, efforts should be made at least to attain the following closely interrelated objectives: i) acceleration of economic and social development and the structural transformation of the national economies; ii) more rapid development of the region's scientific-technical capacity; iii) promotion of an equitable distribution of national income and complete elimination of absolute poverty in the shortest possible time, with special application of an integrated strategy to end hunger and malnutrition; iv) construction of an appropriate economic policy to establish conditions that will make it possible to control or prevent inflation, without resorting to recessive measures which cause unemployment and exacerbate social tensions, or to adjustment processes that may contribute to the deterioration of the socioeconomic conditions of popular

sectors --and of women in particular within them; and v) encouragement of the effective economic, social and political participation of the entire population, especially women, young women and youth in general, in the economic, social and cultural development process and in decision-making at all levels.

106. In order to achieve women's full integration in national development, not to limit national development plans to devoting a special chapter to women's problems; rather, the measures that relate to these problems should be organically incorporated in every pertinent sector. It is essential, moreover, to formulate, adopt and implement policies that will substantially improve the conditions in which women take part in the economic and social development process and to put into effect those structural changes that are needed in order to adjust the mechanism for guaranteeing women's full equality and the elimination of discriminatory barriers to their full participation in production and all development tasks. It is equally essential to establish measures for following up such policies and reviewing and evaluating them on a regular basis in order to assess their efficacy.

107. To make profound structural changes in order to establish and improve the national mechanisms for guaranteeing women's full equality with men and for the application of measures to achieve women's true integration in their countries' economic, social, political and cultural development processes, and, in addition, to situate the national machinery at a sufficiently central and high level to influence decision-making; to confer on the national machinery the mandate to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate all policies influencing the integration of women into the development process; and to assign sufficient human and financial resources to enable the national machinery to discharge its responsibilities.

108. To achieve women's participation in decision-making at all levels in respect of nutrition, food and agriculture, in order to accelerate the development process, particularly rural development. Integrated land reform and rural development policies should be designed and established in order to guarantee rural women access to the land, the necessary support in carrying out the production process and the revaluation of their work in the production, elaboration, marketing, managing and preparation of foodstuffs.

109. To promote the real democratization of education, eliminating all concepts that discriminate against women, at all levels; the generalization of elementary or complete basic education for all school-age children; the eradication of illiteracy and other problems that hinder the normal development of children; and the gradual, in-depth intensification of programmes of integrated care for pre-school children. Policies in this regard should ensure that everybody is mentally developed and possesses basic knowledge for living and that everyone is qualified for an economically and socially productive life. In other words, education should be equitable for all: on the one hand, forming human beings who are useful to society and, on the other hand, training each type of worker in line with his or her own kind of work. It should be borne in mind that this requires harmonizing equality of opportunities for all with a specialization that is appropriate for society.

110. To reduce the shortage of urban and rural housing and increase the supply of housing for the low-income majorities solving the problems of the deterioration of urban and rural housing and of the peripheral settlements with precarious housing, and improving the electric light, drinking water and sewerage infrastructure. For this purpose, an absolutely essential requisite will be State participation, giving priority attention to the lowest-income population's housing needs.

111. To procure access to health services free of charge; to enlarge the coverage of services, especially in the rural areas; to develop special preventive maternal and child health plans; to give women access to appropriate information and methods for exercising their rights and responsibilities with respect to their own fecundity; and to promote breast feeding in early infancy as a source of natural basic food. To these ends, men's and women's full and equal participation in the adoption of policy decisions relating to the health services is required at the community and national levels.

112. To establish programmes providing equal opportunities for women in the areas of sport, recreation and culture, since these are activities of great importance in the present century, necessary for self-realization and for the conservation of the cultural identity of peoples.

113. To adopt, as soon as possible, the measures needed for a thorough review of national legislation, in order to ensure the legal equality of men and women in all areas, with special emphasis on civil, family, labour, agrarian and criminal law; to establish, wherever appropriate, a régime of family ownership that guarantees that the assets possessed at the time of the couple's marriage or consensual union will be for the benefit of both; in countries where no Family Code exists, to include the pertinent norms in the civil legislation; and, finally, to apply the mechanisms needed to provide women with adequate information on all juridical and legislative questions that concern them, thus guaranteeing more efficient implementation of the provisions.

114. To promote the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, since these legislative measures are incorporated in it, and its adoption would mean that the goal of equality were more quickly reached. Dissemination of the Convention should be promoted throughout the region.

115. To create conditions that generate employment for the growing number of women who constitute a high percentage of the unemployed and underemployed; to design and implement training programmes that equip unskilled women in the labour force with technical skills, applying, where appropriate, measures in favour of women to enable them to attain the same level as men; and to devote special attention to job opportunities in the rural areas, with a view to helping, furthermore, to slow up the rural-urban migration.

116. To adopt legislative measures permitting use of the mass media to eradicate the transmission of sexist cultural models, which should be replaced by others that recognize natural differences between the sexes. Impetus should be given to the diffusion of the Regional Plan of Action, of the findings of research on women and of the measures adopted on their behalf, and alternative channels of communication should be promoted. The object sought is a change in the mechanisms of cultural transmission, to which end it is indispensable to create alternative channels of communication at all levels, and to establish permanent spaces in the social communication media. The Regional Plan of Action should be incorporated into the formal educational system, so that the population is informed and can participate actively and consciously in its implementation.

117. To ensure that the problems stemming from the economic crisis do not cause a continuance of the deterioration in the social policies that benefit the least-favoured groups, since in many countries social programmes have been drastically affected as a result of the adjustment process imposed by IMF. Special attention should be paid to the need for continuity in all social programmes and projects concerned with women --both those designed to improve their living conditions and those that seek to transform their image of themselves. In this respect, emphasis should be placed on training and consciousness-raising among policy-makers in order to sensitize them to the necessity of establishing programmes for women.

118. To recognize the importance of the role of non-governmental organizations concerned with women by promoting their establishment as an integral part of overall development efforts and by providing adequate financial support.

119. To formulate more concrete observations and proposals concerning the integration of women in a framework that is in accord with the march of science and technology, with the environment and with its impact on women; and to incorporate topics related to women in the context of regional co-operation.

120. To establish policies aimed at helping young women to overcome obstacles and enabling them to achieve incorporation into social life that is compatible with their diverse roles and balanced self-fulfilment. The relevant group of measures especially embraces education and labour and environmental problems, but it also includes many aspects of social policy. It must not be forgotten that the change in women's functions in modern society and the overcoming of subordination and discrimination demand that they participate much more actively in collective life. As a result, the training of young women should play a very important role in their effective participation.

121. To make young women the focus of very energetic policies aimed at the achievement of their full integration, culturally and workwise, and at the provision of specific services to improve personal and family conditions in all their dimensions. This will make it possible to break one of the circuits operative in the reproduction of poverty and marginality, which are conducive to prostitution and other types of social behaviour that are injurious to women's dignity.

122. To create specific forms of participation that, at the same time, help to overcome marginalization and adapt policies to fit real needs and solutions.

123. To place special emphasis on measures to raise the educational level of young women in the strata under consideration to the same level as that of young men, as a means of combating social and labour force discrimination against women. In order to offset discrimination against women in this sphere, it is important to encourage diverse forms of participation.

124. To assign high priority to action in the field of health, education and social welfare services, directed towards promoting responsible parenthood and avoiding the health and social consequences involved for both mother and child in pregnancies at a very early age, too close together, accompanied by poor states of health, and/or occurring in inadequate physical and family conditions.

At the regional level

125. To make the greatest possible efforts to attain the goals and objectives established in the Regional Plan of Action on the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, which was approved in Havana in 1977 and constitutes the basic instrument in which the action priorities --which are still valid for the region-- are defined.

126. To promote, within the framework of programmes for economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, and in the context of regional and subregional agreements, those aspects of the recommendations in question that bear on the full integration of women into their countries' economic and social development.

127. To support action in quest of negotiated political settlements of the conflicts in Central America; and to back the peace moves of the Contadora Group as the most viable alternative for the solution of the crisis in Central America and the Caribbean, to the benefit of their peoples and in particular of women, as the most vulnerable sector in conflicts of this type. Foreign intervention in these countries constitutes the most serious obstacle to securing peace in the region and therefore the success of the strategies up to the year 2000. For that reason, major efforts are required to procure peaceful solutions to the existing problems and condemnation of the use of threats or force in relations between States. Similarly, it will be necessary to include in the strategies consideration of the problems for women implicit in foreign intervention, which provokes areas of tension in diverse parts of the region, giving rise to situations like those of women who are refugees, displaced, and subject to emergencies.

128. To stress the need for perfecting statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in the areas of health, employment and education, in order to provide a data base by virtue of which the statistical information could be analysed in time to improve the quality of decisions. In this regard, close collaboration in the field of research among regional and international research institutions is emphasized.

129. To recommend to the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN) that it include an appraisal of the incorporation of women in economic, social and cultural development as part of its periodic appraisals, and that it formulate recommendations, within the framework of the objectives and goals of the Regional Plan of Action, that promote the active participation and improvement of the situation of women in the region's development process and the attainment of the objectives of the New International Development Strategy with a view to the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women.

130. To give priority, in ECLAC's various forums and agencies, to the study and analysis of the fundamental concepts, strategies and measures contained in the Regional Plan of Action, so as to avoid duplication of efforts and strengthen the criterion that the status of women is not divorced from the countries' economic, social, political and cultural problems.

131. To make great efforts to strengthen the ECLAC programme for women, and to urge the United Nations, within the resources available, to endow the Commission with sufficient staff and resources to enable it to carry out its programmes.

132. To request ECLAC to continue approaching the General Assembly, the United Nations institutions and other organizations with a view to obtaining the financial resources which the Secretariat needs in order to meet the requests of governments more fully, given the importance of the topic of women.

133. To recommend to ECLAC that it take steps to fill at the earliest possible date the post of Subregional Co-ordinator of the Programme for Women in its Mexico Office in order to contribute more effectively to the full achievement of the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action, as agreed at the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 1983).

134. To request that ECLAC should increase the participation of women specialists in questions related to the work of the Commission, in order to step up the number of women in positions with decision-making faculties, as established in the decisions of the General Assembly.

135. To support and expand technical and economic activities on behalf of women in the region, through closer collaboration with the relevant international development financing institutions.

<u>At the international level</u>

136. To recognize that the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and the Declaration on the Participation of Women in

Promoting International Peace and Co-operation are still valid today, and, therefore, constitute the basis for concrete strategies and measures up to the year 2000.

137. To reiterate the unity, inseparability and interdependence of the objectives of equality, development and peace for the advancement of women and their full integration into economic, social and cultural development, for which purpose they should remain in force in the operational strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000.

138. To improve the institutional linkages between the Commission on the Status of Women, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and all other United Nations bodies, in order to facilitate efforts to integrate women into the development process at the international level.

139. To seek to ensure that the various international bodies succeed in creating conditions to provide women with possibilities of access to development of their artistic and athletic capabilities, oriented especially towards young women, using for that purpose high-level motivation, publicity and training programmes.

140. To stress the importance of promoting technical, scientific and economic co-operation and analogous social and cultural exchanges between countries of the region and other developing countries, with a view to strengthening the region's ability to build on its own resources and contribute to its self-reliance within the world economy; and, further, to stress the need to ensure the full participation of women in these activities.

141. To recognize that the growing interrelationship between the preservation of peace and the attainment of development in conditions of equality between States is of strategic importance for the improvement of the status of women, and that consequently there is a pressing need to demand the effective attainment of the goals and objectives contained in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the adoption of policy measures which could permit its execution as a first step towards the implementation of the New International Economic Order.

142. To emphasize that since women comprise one of the most vulnerable groups in the areas affected by armed conflicts, by internal situations of repression and violation of human rights, or by foreign intervention and threats to international peace, they must be the subject of special attention, since these obstacles obstruct achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace.

143. To carry out, every five years and with the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, an appraisal of the successes achieved and the obstacles encountered in pursuing the objectives contained in the relevant documents.

144. To support and expand technical and economic activities for women in the region through collaboration with international development assistance agencies. In this respect the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women is particularly recognized as implying an innovative contribution in the area of technical assistance for development in favour of disadvantaged women in the different regions and its continuation and expansion beyond the Decade is considered of vital importance to the development needs of women in the region.

145. To support the activities of the International Institute of Training and Research for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), which does important work in this field.

146. To request in particular the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to appraise what has been done to improve the status of women, to increase their financial support and to establish the measures necessary for the continued implementation of the Regional Plan of Action.

147. To stress the essential need for all States Members of the United Nations that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Annex

Documentos de trabajo
Documents de travail
Working papers

Temario provisional Provisional agenda Ordre du jour provisoire	LC/L.311(Conf.77/1)
Temario provisional anotado Annotated provisional agenda Ordre du jour provisoire annoté	LC/L.316(Conf.77/2)
La mujer rural de América Latina: un actor social del último decenio (1975-1984) The rural woman in Latin America: A social actor in the past decade (1975-1984) La femme rurale en Amérique latine: Agent social de la dernière décennie (1975-1984)	LC/L.312(Conf.77/3)
Aportes para la evaluación del Decenio de las Naciones Unidas para la mujer y para el diseño de estrategias hacia el futuro Contributions to the Appraisal of the United Nations Decade for Women and the Design of Strategies for the future Contributions à l'évaluation de la Décennie des Nations Unies pour la Femme et à la définition de stratégies prospectives	LC/L.313(Conf.77/4)

Documentos de referencia
Documents de référence
Reference documents

Informe del grupo de expertas sobre las estrategias de ejecución para el adelanto de la mujer hasta el año 2000 Report of the Group of Experts on Operational Strategies for the Advancement of Women up to the year 2000 Rapport du groupe d'expertes des stratégies à mettre en oeuvre pour promouvoir le développement de la femme d'ici à l'an 2000	LC/G.1322
Selección de publicaciones de la CEPAL realizadas durante el Decenio de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer: Igualdad, Desarrollo y Paz Selected publications prepared by ECLAC during the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace	LC/L.320(Conf.77/5)